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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ADULT CAREER CHANGE

BY

ROBERT WILLIAM HANSON

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1991

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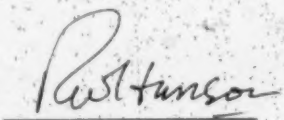

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Adult Career Change submitted by Robert William Hanson in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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DEDICATED TO:

the participants in the study,

Dr. Margaret Haughey,

Deb, Shauna, Craig, Brian, Mark and David

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the concerns, issues and processes that were involved in the decision of middle-aged individuals to abandon previous careers and enrol as mature undergraduate students at a large Canadian university.

The study was based on an interpretive research design utilizing a qualitative methodology and naturalistic inquiry. It was exploratory in that there was little information available on higher education as a tool for midlife career change. The meanings held by the respondents were seen as being the focus of this study. Thus the research was directed towards a search for understanding rather than a formulation of conclusions and generalizations regarding mature university students and career change.

The researcher, in conjunction with his thesis advisor selected, on the basis of age, nature of contemplated career change and full time status at the university, six of the ten volunteers who offered to be participants in the study.

All participants were dissatisfied with their work roles. Boredom, lack of meaning, insufficient earning potential, reaching the job plateau, psychosomatic illness, and lack of self esteem were the primary sources of

dissatisfaction that were noted by the participants.

The mature students noted a need to make a difference in the world as a primary reason for abandoning old occupations and seeking new direction. Most of the participants felt that they had to make a change before it was too late. Concerns over ill health, inertia, earning potential, self esteem and self expression were highlighted.

Three themes emerged from their stories. Each of the participants faced significant risks in deciding to relinquish their present lifestyle for the uncertainty of university enrolment and future career paths.

Many of the participants, in choosing an educational focus, decided to follow earlier inclinations that were thwarted by parents, lack of finances and/or lack of self esteem.

Each of the participants felt that they were meant to embark on different directions in their lives. They sensed that they had unique experiences, talents and abilities that could be better utilized in other vocations.

Table of Contents

Chapter I Introduction to the Study

Background to the Study.....1

Statement of the Problem.....5

Definition of Terms.....5

Significance of the Problem.....6

Assumptions.....7

Delimitations.....8

Limitations.....8

Organization of the Thesis.....8

Chapter II Methodology

Design of the Study.....10

Research Instrument.....11

Data Sources.....12

Data Collection.....13

Data Analysis.....15

Trustworthiness and Dependability.....16

Chapter III Description of the Study Findings

Introduction.....17

Profile of the Participants.....17

Description of the Findings.....22

Decision to Change Careers.....23

Parental Guidance.....23

Need to Move.....26

Outside Forces.....27

Work Hassles.....28

Making a Difference.....30
Time is Slipping Away.....33
Occupational and Educational Choice.... 34
Previous Attempts.....34
Foreshadowing.....35
Decision Making Patterns.....38
Education as a Means to an End.....40
Education for Education's Sake.....40
Career Goals.....41
Sacrifices to Enrolment.....43
Reaction to Change - Spouse/Children....46
Barriers to Enrolment.....47
Reaction to Change - Family & Friends...48
Apprehensions.....51
Life Change - Education.....52
Feelings of Freedom.....53
The Degree as Opposed to the Process....53
Themes.....55
Willingness to Risk.....56
Diverted Opportunities.....60
Sense of Mission.....62
Summary.....63
Chapter IV Summary, Reflections and Implications
Summary - Purpose of the Study.....67
Methodology.....67
Major Findings.....69

Reflections-Literature & Study Findings.....72

Self Concept and the Change Process.....76

Multiple Careers & Midlife Change.....79

Higher Education as a Tool for Career Change.....89

Chapter V Personal Reflections And Implications

Personal Reflections.....93

Implications.....96

Practical.....96

Research.....97

Concluding Statement.....98

References.....99

Appendices

A. Correspondence.....103

B. Problem Statement, Interview Plan.....107

C. Transcript Samples.....111

D. Journal Notations.....118

Vita.....121

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Much has been written recently about career change and adult development (Bolles, 1988; Kanchier, 1987; Levinson, 1978; Sheehy, 1976,1978; Sher, 1979). This study sought to examine the reasons people turn to education at this time in their lives.

Within the past twenty five years, the phenomenon of multiple career change has become more common. Murphy and Burck (1976) noted that the frequency of midlife career change will increase appreciably in the upcoming years. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) forecast that people in their twenties could expect to make six or seven job changes over the course of their working lives. More conservatively, Haase (1983) projected that by the year 2000 over seventy percent of working adults will have made at least one major employment change and that the majority will make that change during midlife (forty to fifty five years). Levinson (1978), however, suggested that, for males, career shifts will most likely occur during the "Becoming One's Own Man" stage, which typically lasts from age thirty five to thirty nine. The man wants to become more of an expert- no longer a protege but a mentor. Thomas (1980) warned

that it is a mistake to lump all midlife career changers together. Nevertheless, all writers speak to the probability of career change or transition.

Boisen (1936) reported his conviction that transition, in its broadest view, has three essential phases: the abandonment of the old centre around which life once revolved; a feeling of loss and self-distress in the middle period; and the finding of a new centre around which life revolves thereafter, with ensuing peacefulness and purpose once again. The middle period, which is what most people mean by transition, is the "disorganization of the person's world". The body and the brain are fully functioning but something has happened which has upset the foundations upon which ordinary reasoning is based.

Flexman (1982) noted that the term "career change" should not be construed as being one distinct type of event. Even if career is used in a narrow sense to denote paid employment, career change can take a number of forms. Some career changes originate mostly in the environment (economic conditions resulting in the elimination of one's job or in creation of new job opportunities). Other career changes may originate mostly in the individual (desires for more independence, more security, more challenging work or less stressful working conditions). Clearly some career changes are viewed subjectively as being positive while others are viewed as being negative. Further, some may be

part of long term plans while others represent disruption of plans. Most changes seem to have elements of both gain and loss but often one overshadows the other. Whether a change is viewed as a gain or loss, adaptation is usually necessary.

Borders and Archadel (1987) noted that client's beliefs regarding their abilities and personalities do influence their career choices. People seek to implement self-beliefs in their career choices. According to Holland's theory as reported by Perosa and Perosa (1985), career changers seek greater congruency between their needs and the work environment. Expectancy theory notes that the job done reflects not only an individual's attraction to the job but also the belief that efforts to obtain it will be successful.

O'Hare and Bentell (1987) compared men and women career changers. The men in their study viewed career decision making as a challenge. They believed that they had control over the career decision making process. Alternatively, the women approached career decision making with the view that they had to be "super" organized to meet all of the demands of the situation. They looked to family and friends for support. The men and women who believed that they could make a decision and viewed career decision making as a challenge, were most likely to arrive at an appropriate career decision.

Murphy and Burck (1976) thought most males, between the ages of thirty five and forty five, reflected upon their personal and career development. Contemplation about their life to date caused them to choose between two alternatives: 1) general satisfaction with prior progress and belief that previously acceptable goals are still attainable, leading to a rededication to continuing their established plans; 2) dissatisfaction with the present situation. Feelings that the current path and rate of progress would not lead to desired results led them to consider other options.

They suggested that a renewal stage be inserted between the stages of establishment and maintenance to provide for this mid career crisis period.

Rapid technological change and the increasing complexities of society have contributed to escalating requirements for occupations. People who are career changers may well find that they require further education to be eligible for different occupations. Some of these mature students may enter higher educational institutions in search of an alternative education. The challenges of enroling in higher education after many years away from school could be seen as contributing to an already elevated anxiety level associated with mid career crisis. Hence, the question may be asked why higher education was chosen to facilitate career change when other less stressful

alternatives for re-training may be readily available.

This study sought to contribute to the knowledge regarding the role of higher education as an agent in adult career change.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to seek tentative answers to the following question:

> What concerns, issues and processes were involved in the decision of adults to abandon a previous career and enrol as mature, undergraduate students at a large Canadian university?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In the study, the following terms have been defined to clarify the meaning that is used within the study.

CAREER The sum total of life experiences including all paid and unpaid work, education, hobbies and leisure activities. A career provides a person with a variety of opportunities to satisfy personal needs. (Alberta Career Development & Employment (1988))

MIDDLE-AGED ADULTS Thirty to forty five years of age

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Career planning experts have noted, in recent years, a tendency away from the one career per lifetime phenomenon. The trend towards having multiple careers in a lifetime has become, and will continue to be, an integral part of modern life.

Formal education, as a vehicle for change has become increasingly popular. The numbers of mature students as a percentage of aggregate student populations has grown dramatically during the past fifteen years.

The study proposed to make a contribution to the understanding of career changing behaviour for a small group of mature students, enroled in the first year of undergraduate studies at a university.

The significance of the study was both practical and theoretical. The results may be of interest to researchers in adult education or adult psychology, as well as those involved in teaching and counselling adults. The knowledge base regarding adult development for the middle-aged segment of the population, with regard to career change and higher education as a vehicle for career change, may have been enhanced by the study.

From a practical viewpoint, the results provided insights into processes involved in multiple career change within a lifetime. Several prominent signals indicating career discontent have been identified, both from a personal and work perspective. The sense of mission, to make a difference in the world, was shown to be a common need. Information learned from this study may have smoothed the transition from old to new career focus for some middle-aged individuals, who chose to use university enrolment as a vehicle for change.

ASSUMPTIONS

It was assumed that the respondents' reports of their personal, educational and career experiences, plus the meanings they attached to these experiences were the best source of data to describe the career development of middle-aged workers. The respondents were deemed to have been honest and truthful in disclosing aspects of their lives. Disclosure regarding past experiences and feelings were presumed to relate to future plans.

In addition, a close relationship between career success and positive self image was assumed. Additionally, it was assumed that career change could be traumatic for some individuals.

DELIMITATIONS

The study was delimited to six men and women, aged thirty to forty five years, who, by their own definition, had successful prior careers but decided to embark on a new career and enroled in first year undergraduate studies in 1988-89 at a university.

LIMITATIONS

The study relied on the informants' willingness and ability to disclose information and feelings to the researcher. The quality of the study depended on the researcher's ability to interview and analyze data. Since the researcher has had extensive experience interviewing career changers, this was not seen to be a major limitation.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter One has introduced the nature of the problem and objectives of the study. Chapter Two outlines the

methodology, research procedures and data collection techniques of the study. In Chapter Three, an analysis of the interview data relating to the research question and emerging themes has been provided. Chapter Four reviews the literature pertaining to self concept, career change, multiple career development, and higher education as a force for career change. The literature is then compared to the findings of the study. Chapter Five, the final chapter of the thesis, presents a summary of the study along with personal reflections and implications for mature students involved in career change.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Two contains the design of the study, the research instrument, the data sources, collection, and analysis, as well as the trustworthiness/dependability of the data.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The intent of this study was to obtain a rich and comprehensive understanding of the use by mature students of higher education to facilitate career change. The study was based on an interpretive research design utilizing a qualitative methodology and naturalistic enquiry. It was exploratory in that there was little information available on higher education as a tool for midlife career change.

Bogdan and Bicklen (1982) have stated that "meaning" is of critical concern in the qualitative approach. Researchers utilizing this approach are intrigued by the ways that different people make sense of their lives. Interpretive research, therefore, seeks to obtain understanding and insight about what people do and why they do those things. In naturalistic inquiry, people are considered to be meaning-making individuals whose meanings

are best obtained through observation and conversation. Such data gathering strategies are qualitative.

The meanings held by the respondents were seen as being the focus of this study. Thus the research was directed towards a search for understanding rather than a formulation of conclusions and generalizations regarding mature university students and career change.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to cover the major research question. The interview guide was pilot tested with a forty one year old woman who contemplated a career change and planned to enrol in university.

This pilot study enabled the researcher to test the interview guidelines and his own interviewing skills. On the basis of the feedback from this interview, the specific questions and inquiry methodologies were refined.

The interviews were semi-structured to enable the researcher to probe for more detailed information when necessary. Open-ended questions enabled the researcher to obtain thorough explanations from the mature students regarding personal interpretations of aspects of their career development.

DATA SOURCES

The researcher contacted the Mature Student Advisor at the University to obtain permission to attend both sessions of the September 1988 Mature Students Orientation Seminar for first year, mature, undergraduate students. The researcher was given the opportunity to spend ten minutes describing his research to both audiences and asked that anyone interested in participating in the study contact him after the session.

At the end of the orientation session, eight women and two men expressed their willingness to participate in the study. The researcher obtained the volunteers' phone numbers and contacted them within a two week period. These volunteers had three common characteristics:

1. they had recently abandoned a previous career
2. they were currently enroled at the university in the first year of undergraduate studies that contributed to the new career focus; and
3. they were willing to talk about their experiences.

Data were gathered from the respondents during the 1988 Fall session at the university. The interviews allowed the volunteers to tell their life stories with emphasis on major career and personal information. The

interviews were tape recorded.

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher contacted all ten respondents in mid September 1988 and arranged to meet with them at a time and place which was convenient. All interviews were conducted between September 13 and October 11, 1988. Four of the female respondents chose to be interviewed in their homes. The two men and remaining four women chose to meet in the researcher's graduate student office. The researcher briefly described the purpose and value of the study to each respondent and explained the time commitment required for the interview and possible follow-up questions. The consent form was discussed in detail with each of the respondents. All ten of the respondents chose to sign the consent form and participate in the study and no one subsequently chose to withdraw from the study. The interviews were from thirty five minutes to one hour and fifteen minutes in duration. The interviewer kept a research journal and recorded journal entries immediately prior to and after each of the interviews to describe his own feelings and impressions as well as his impressions of the interviewee and the interview process.

The researcher, in consultation with his thesis

advisor, reviewed brief biographies of each of the respondents. Because of the vast quantity of data generated in the interviews and time constraints associated with the analysis, it was decided, in order to conduct a comprehensive data analysis, that the remainder of the study be limited to six respondent interviews. Four respondents were separated out on the basis of age (under thirty), nature of the contemplated occupational change (from grade six teacher to kindergarten teacher; communications consultant to writer specializing in women's issues) and part-time university enrolment. Those who were attending university part time, continued to work full time in their previous occupation and were not considered to have abandoned their previous career. The four respondents who were not to be included in the remainder of the study were thanked for their time and were informed by letter that they would not be contacted further concerning the study.

Once the interviews were transcribed, the respondents were given copies of the their interview transcripts for their perusal. The researcher contacted two of the participants and was told that there were no revisions or alterations required to the transcripts. Upon completion of the first draft of the thesis, the researcher sent copies of Chapter Three to each of the participants for review. Four of the participants were contacted to obtain

their impressions of the analysis of their responses. Two minor revisions were made to one of the participant's quotations.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis began with the first interview as the researcher thought about the interviewees' comments and reflected on them in his journal. The transcripts were photocopied and colour coded by respondent. The data were then coded by research question and other identified themes.

Copies of the transcripts were forwarded to the respondents. None of the respondents chose to expand or explain in further detail any aspect of the interview. Each transcript was read over a number of times in order to become familiar with the voice of the respondent. Then each "meaning unit" was coded by name in the margin. When all the transcripts were coded, another copy of each transcript was cut up and sorted into similar coding categories. These were put into two major groupings based on the respondents' reasons for deciding to change careers and for deciding to enrol in higher education. Within each grouping, the categories were re-examined to ensure that the labels were appropriate. Finally, the data were

organized to provide for continuity in the telling of the stories. Following delineation of the categories, the transcripts were reread in order to identify themes.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND DEPENDABILITY

Guba and Lincoln (1982) noted the importance of dependability in naturalistic enquiry. The researcher can safeguard against loss of credibility by performing member checks. The data and interpretations of same are continually checked with those individuals from whom the data originated.

The researcher utilized the process of peer review, confirmation and member checks. The data were cross-checked with the thesis advisor and selected colleagues. Chapter Three of this study was also sent in its entirety to the respondents for their perusal.

To ensure that ethical considerations were met, the researcher sought approval to conduct the study through appropriate administrative channels at the university. Subjects were informed in advance that participation was voluntary and that all interviews were confidential. Although quotations from interviews were utilized in the study, the sources were not identified. Each respondent was given a pseudonym to ensure his/her anonymity.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the study provides a brief introduction to the six participants and a description of the interview data.

The purpose of the study again was to seek tentative answers to the following question:

> What concerns, issues and processes were involved in the decision of middle-aged individuals to abandon a previous career and enrol as mature, undergraduate students at a large Canadian university?

PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Six participants who met the following criteria were involved in this study:

1) They have recently abandoned a previous career;
2) They were currently enroled full time at the university in the first year of undergraduate studies that contributed to the new career focus; and

3) They were willing to talk about their experiences.

This background information is given to ensure that each respondent's comments be viewed within a specific context. The profiles of the six respondents (four women and two men) are listed as follows:

Ian, aged 45, was married. He and his wife had no children. Ian was raised in Eastern Canada but had lived in Edmonton for over fifteen years. His previous educational experience included a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and English that was completed during his early twenties. He had briefly been involved in various jobs as a banker, provincial policeman, and supply teacher, before deciding on personnel work with a large multi-divisional organization. His wife was also employed in this field as a Human Resource professional. Ian had experienced marked success in this profession and had lived a full, affluent life. At the time of the interview, he was working part time in personnel and attending university classes on a full time basis in Education. He aspired to become an educational entrepreneur.

Ken, 35, was married with two small children. He had a high school diploma and had obtained trade certification as a carpenter. Previous jobs included carpentry, industrial and retail sales, as well as trucking. He was a native Edmontonian. At the time of the interview, Ken was enroled in Arts but wished to transfer to the Education

faculty to become an elementary teacher.

Heather was a 30 year old single parent with a 7 year old daughter. Her highest previous educational attainment was a high school diploma. She had worked for over ten years as a legal secretary. Although she had experienced prolonged success in the field, she needed a change. At the time of the interview, Heather was enroled in Education and aspired to work with gifted children.

Maureen was 39 years old and had a teenage son and a three year old daughter. Her young adult years were difficult ones for her. Widowed in her twenties, she was now married to a physician. She had previously attended university in Quebec and Europe but was not able to obtain a degree. A technical diploma resulted in employment as a med-lab technician and instructor in a post secondary institution. She was enroled in the first year of the Bachelors in Fine Arts program.

Gail was 38 years of age. A single parent with a six year old son, she had previously obtained a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology. She had worked briefly as a janitor and librarian before becoming a pay and benefits clerk for a provincial government in Eastern Canada. She had experienced severe allergic difficulties while working in a large industrial city and moved to Edmonton to be able to breathe cleaner air and be closer to family. She was enroled in Education.

Beth, aged 32, a high school graduate, had been able to attend university previously in Education both in Calgary and Toronto. Married to a financial executive with a large corporation, she and her husband had two small children. She was enroled in Arts with a specialization in anthropology. She had some questions which she felt that she needed to answer and decided that enrolment in university would fulfil this need.

Prior to commencing the analysis of the research data, I felt it important to disclose some pertinent information regarding myself.

I was raised in Edmonton, the only child of middle class parents. My father had obtained a university degree in Dairy Science and spent many years in the food and agricultural sectors. I do not remember being overtly directed toward any specific vocation, although a university education and a professional focus was definitely expected.

Early in my childhood, I had developed a propensity for remembering names and characteristics of people. Any success that I have had vocationally has involved supervising, coaching, teaching and counselling others.

Upon graduation from high school, I was uncertain regarding a future vocational direction. I remember thinking about law and banking from ages twelve to fifteen, then medicine from sixteen to eighteen. Upon graduation

from high school, I enroled in pre-med in Science at the University of Alberta.

Despite working very hard, I was unsuccessful in gaining admission to the Faculty of Medicine in either Edmonton or Calgary. Half way though my third year of Science, it was apparent to me that I would not be able to pursue a medical career. I discussed my future with a representative of the student counselling service at the university and was advised to enrol in Commerce.

Upon completion of my B. Comm., I joined a chartered bank in the management training program. I was exposed to administration, personal and commercial credit as well as financial planning. After twelve transfers in three and one half years, I decided that I wanted to remain in Edmonton and left the bank.

After nine months without steady employment, I spent the next ten years in accounting and administration with several small businesses. Accounting in particular was especially frustrating for me, and I developed an asthmatic condition as a direct result of being involved in an occupation in which I was neither interested nor particularly skilled. I found that none of the values which were important for me were met in the accounting profession.

I was also briefly involved in direct sales and tax consulting before undergoing extensive career counselling.

There, I learned that my innate strengths were in adult education, counselling and general management. I enroled in the Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and then in the Masters program in Adult and Higher Education. For the past five years, I have been an educational entrepreneur, academic upgrading instructor, staff development consultant, personnel consultant and career planning specialist. In future I aspire to become heavily involved in outplacement counselling and consulting.

My volatile occupational history sparked an interest in career planning and my principal areas of interest for research purposes have been in this area.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FINDINGS

The data are grouped within a framework which addresses the two aspects of the major research question in the study: 1) the reasons for deciding to change careers and 2) the decision to enrol in higher education. The findings are presented in the categories which surfaced from an analysis of the data. It was noted that, for the participants, the choice making process was ongoing. The participants found it difficult to distinguish exactly where the decision to change careers ended and the decision

to enrol began. Thus the data do not address these research foci separately, as was originally planned.

DECISION TO CHANGE CAREERS

The following passages describe the major categories which arose from the interview data relating to how the participants arrived at the decision to change careers.

Parental Guidance

While none of the participants mentioned any special childhood desires or dreams regarding a clear occupational focus, all noted that, when they were children, they were strongly influenced by their parents, regarding specific vocational directions.

Ian, whose father was a tradesman, noted, in his youth, a strong parental pressure, especially from his mother, for him to become a constable with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. His parents thought that would be quite an accomplishment for him.

Heather's family was also blue collar. Her parents and siblings discouraged her from attending university. They thought a secure, stable government clerical job, like that of her mother, would be perfect for Heather.

Ken remembered the lack of ideas regarding possible

occupations, even after grade 12. His parents encouraged him to enrol in a seminary to become a Lutheran pastor.

Maureen had longed to fulfil a need for intense artistic creativity as a child, without any occupational focus. Her parents had made conscious and deliberate attempts to dissuade her from artistic expression, throughout her childhood. Her mother discouraged her from practising art because it was not practical. She related several dramatic examples from her youth to emphasize this point:

> I think that my mother and my uncles think in some strange way that there are great artists and then there is nothing else.
>
> When I said that I liked art, my father said "your grandfather was a great draughtsman."
>
> I felt sick that my mother really felt that art was very impractical. Her reaction to it was very unpleasant and very negative. I knew I would not be living at home if I was doing that.
>
> There was one real drawing that I had done. I had folded it up neatly and put it on my dresser. She came home in a bad mood and one of the first things that she did was to start screaming at me "What is this piece of garbage?" then ripped it up. She did enjoy ballet and fine painters and she always had books of prints and things like that. She appreciated fine art but it was something that I should never aspire to.

The dream of becoming an artist was strong for Maureen in her teenage years. She moved away from her home and away from her support during that time to pursue artistic endeavours in Quebec.

Gail also noted a distinct lack of career aspirations during childhood. She reported no parental influence regarding a specific occupational focus, but said that her parents had instilled in her, however, that she would go to university.

Beth reported a childhood interest in becoming a teacher. Her grandfather was a principal, her grandmother a teacher and her mother had taken teacher training. Her parents and grandparents felt that "a teaching career was something that a woman could do vocationally".

It was interesting to note that all of the participants, at some point in their early career development, followed their parent's advice by attempting to succeed in the prescribed vocation. Ian did work for a while in the R.C.M.P. Heather married at a young age and became a secretary in a "secure" specialization. Ken enroled in a Lutheran college. Maureen did become "something practical" by working as a med-lab technician. Gail obtained a university degree in Arts for which there were no career consequences. Beth enroled in Education upon graduation from high school. In each case, they expressed feelings of disillusionment and "lack of fit" which led them to seek careers that were more meaningful and rewarding.

Need to move

For four of the participants, the need to alter their geographical environment was significant. Two wished to return to Alberta for their schooling. Another two wished to use education as a route to escape to the country.

Beth felt isolated in a small Eastern Canadian city without the benefits of large city living. She yearned to be back in the prairies and near to the mountains once again. She seemed to have a need to be close to her parents and siblings again.

> (That city) was not a place that I particularly liked. It's a nice enough place but it didn't suit me. It didn't have the kinds of things that I liked to do. No theatre, no wilderness, no university, and no family that was close to me.
>
> The frustration would hit once every six months. It hit me whenever I left and saw there were cities out there because I forgot what a city was and what it could offer. As soon as I saw that---as soon as I would come home and see the mountains---hey I'm not going back.

Gail needed to escape the pollutants of a large eastern industrial city because of severe asthmatic and allergic difficulties. She chose Edmonton for its cleaner air and a "hoped-for" support network from her siblings.

Ian preferred to reside in a rural mountainous setting in Western Canada and perceived his education as assisting with the enhancement of that move.

Maureen planned to move to coastal British Columbia but did not regard education as a factor in this move.

It was evident, for four of the participants, that they had to change something significant in their life. In an attempt to ascertain what they needed to change, some of them felt that a change in geographical setting would be beneficial.

Outside Forces

In deciding to change, some of the participants took into account some external factors that had an impact on their decision.

Heather mentioned the example of a 40 year old peer who had "rotted" in her secretarial job as a prime motivation for seeking a new life.

Heather was also concerned that she set a proper occupational example for her daughter.

> I also believe a lot of times you follow your parent's footsteps and I feel if I am a professional, that maybe there is a better chance that (my daughter) will be one and I think that is important. Education is the way to go. If you don't have an education, there's just not a lot out there for you.

Ken had experienced several employment setbacks in the past few years. He drifted from job to job and was not able to meet the financial needs of his family. He and his wife jointly decided that it was time for him to become established in an occupation that offered some financial security.

Work Hassles

All of the participants noted a concern with their current working environment which had an impact on their decision to change.

Ian was successful and secure in his work with personnel in a large organization. However something was missing. The work had no personal meaning for him. He could see no purpose in continuing in the work for compensatory reasons only and saw himself as being meant to do something more with his life.

Beth felt frustrated in looking after her young children without any rewarding outside interests. The small city life, far from her parents and birthplace, was not appealing. Her husband, who travelled a lot in his work, was having fun, but she was not. The growing feelings of frustration motivated her to find work for her husband in Alberta.

Maureen, most recently had been employed as a technical instructor on a contract basis. Although she enjoyed teaching and helping the students with their studies, she felt overly sensitive to criticism and took things too personally. She also noted a tendency within herself to perfectionism.

> I decided to get out of teaching gracefully. I thought, I won't just retire. Why I'll enrol in university in fine arts!!!!! So that just evolved.

Maureen also has had a nagging need throughout her

life to create. She also planned to move to Victoria with her family in the near future.

Ken had some problems with unemployment and under-employment in his working life. He noted a need to succeed in something. A strong desire to serve God prevented him from working with undesirable peers in the carpentry trade. The antics which his colleagues performed on and off the work site bothered his conscience.

Gail suffered severe stress in her work as a pay and benefits clerk:

> My job has been constant stress for the past five to seven years, with mandatory overtime and a lot of bad politics. There had been a lot of stress from day one. Staff have been having severe health problems, psychological problems and dependency problems, divorces, runaway teenagers. The last batch of extreme overtime, I developed asthma and my son had serious problems. Nobody wants that job.

Heather had reached the top of her profession as a legal secretary. She was good at her job and was in high demand within the legal community. But she took an inward look at her life and also at those around her. A fellow secretary who was in her early forties was "rotting" in her job, waiting to find a spouse and/or waiting for retirement.

> There was this one girl whom I became very close to at the job. Betty is 40 years old, a single parent and has been a legal secretary forever. She was never getting ahead. Even with the raises and bonuses, she was always just meeting her expenses.

> I think what made me finally go to university. I just took a look at her. I'm going to be there. I will be another Betty. You know, my daughter will be 12 or 13. Betty's knowledge was really limited. She was no longer even interested in current events and that scared me. I thought I can't, I don't want to be there.

Heather was afraid that she would end up like her colleague if she did not get out now. Teaching, which "was always there" was her escape route.

Making a Difference

All of the participants were motivated, to some extent, to change careers in order to make a difference in the world. Five of the respondents expressed a need to help others in some direct manner. The sixth participant focused on her own personal needs through her art work, and hoped her work would touch others.

Gail enroled in the Education faculty to fulfil a commitment to guide children towards our "exciting culture---it's not all on American television". She felt a particular need to create an awareness in the children of both the French and English culture in Western Canada. She also discovered a need, though her work as an astrologer, for people to bolster their self-confidence.

> (People) need a sense of being accepted for who they were, whatever that was. I think if I had access to a counsellor like that, or access to that type of attitude in junior high school and high school, I might have had a happier time and consequently done a

> bit better in school. Who knows what I might have done?

Ian had feelings of disillusionment that were associated with an occupation in which he had expressed prolonged success. He saw no purpose in doing the job other than for compensation.

> The money was good but I wasn't getting any personal value out of it. I couldn't see spending twenty or more years of productive employment doing something that really was of no value to me. I really had a lot of conflict within myself for quite a while. What am I really providing to society?

After years devoted to the successful pursuit of materialistic treasures, he no longer felt them to have lasting importance. A feeling had persisted for a number of years that his occupation was not providing enough personal meaning. The money and benefits were "not enough".

Beth mentioned that she liked to cheer for the underdog. She felt that "there were people in our country that were getting a raw deal. I kind of wanted to see what I could do to help".

While in Eastern Canada, Beth along with a friend organized a support group that dealt with women who had undergone caesarean section surgery.

> Why is our society like this? What other societies are like that? Why are there so many caesarean sections? Twenty percent is abnormally high when you think that if it is a life saving device that twenty percent of all women would die if they didn't have it. Also being in Eastern Canada without my

> family. My mother and my father, sisters and all that and having a family and how people in society cope. I know a lot of people do cope but I found it very, very difficult to have small children and not have a support group of parents, sisters, so I just picked up some anthropological books to see what happens in other societies. That's why I'm interested in anthropology.

Heather felt a real need to help children who were gifted. She saw her child as being gifted and she experienced some trauma in dealing with a school system that was not oriented to the special needs of her child. "I wanted to work with kids like (her daughter) ...I could really feel for them because I was on the other side of the fence."

Ken aspired to teach elementary school children after several rewarding experiences in administering and teaching in a children's church program.

> I just loved it, presenting stories, teaching, I had a real concern for the children. Not just blabbing off a story but really feeling for them.

Maureen enroled in Fine Arts primarily to express herself on canvas and in clay. She wished to create and fulfil her own needs that were thwarted in her earlier life and viewed the selling of her art as a compromise. "By marketing your art, you're automatically changing your art".

As we see, all of the participants, to some extent at least, expressed a need to make a difference in the world. For them, making a difference in the world was a

justification for changing their life.

Time is slipping away

Although the question of time was not referred to initially in any of the interview questions, four of the participants identified it as a factor in their decision to change careers. Beth, because of the time that was spent in a small Eastern Canadian city raising two small children, reported that she felt "cheated a lot of the time". She felt that "time was slipping away and it's not what I want".

Maureen noted ten years of early adulthood as being a painful period of real growth but lost time. Parental support was completely lacking during a period in which she would have liked to continue her education.

> It (referring to the above-noted ten years) sure cost me a lot of years of wasted time (in which I was trying to find my way) struggling along without really any help, really being very lost.

Heather felt trapped in an occupation in which earnings and personal growth potential had stabilized. She felt that if she did not leave the occupation soon that she would, like a 40 year old female colleague, "rot" in it until retirement.

Ian was concerned regarding his future health as he grew older and approached his fiftieth birthday. He felt that he may not have the health and stamina much longer to

change occupations and meet new challenges.

The major considerations for the participants in the decision to abandon old occupational directions were hassles at work, the need to make a difference, the sense that time was running out and environmental forces. Parental guidance was not viewed as being a significant determinant in the decision to leave the previous occupation.

OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

The following passages describe the major categories which arose from the interview data relating to how the participants made decisions regarding occupational and educational direction.

Previous Attempts

Of the six participants, Ian and Gail had previously attained undergraduate degrees in Arts, Beth and Maureen had attended some university classes, and Ken and Heather had no university training. Both Beth and Maureen had to quit university due to pregnancy. Maureen, who had experienced many serious setbacks in her life, reported happiness in her condition and did not regard the interruption to her studies as a serious setback.

For Beth, the need for university studies was extremely compelling. She had even commuted on a weekly basis to and from a university two hundred miles from her home. She noted the feeling of devastation when she discovered that she would have to give up her studies.

Beth, Maureen and Heather had expressed the highest level of enthusiasm at the thought of attending university. Beth and Maureen had enjoyed their previous taste of university life and looked forward to continuing their studies now.

Foreshadowing

Five of the participants noted particular trends in their life which impacted their career decisions.

Beth was able to identify a theme which seemed to permeate her adult life. She saw herself to be very much an organizer and initiator who was driven by the challenge to get something worthwhile started. Evidence of this came from organizing, during the past ten years a bridge club and school, a support group for women contemplating caesarian section surgery and a job search on behalf of her husband for employment in Alberta while they resided in Ontario. Once these projects were functional and running smoothly, her challenge and drive were gone and she was ready for another project.

Beth also identified a need for control that was

lacking in her role as a housewife.

> I always thought that I had control over my life but suddenly I didn't have any control. I always knew what I wanted. I didn't feel it was me that was actually keeping me where I was and what bothered me was the external control. Once my kids were in school, there was nothing to do. There was no place to go to take interest courses or anything I wanted to. When I was 19, I felt that I knew more than I ever would again. I knew everything. I knew exactly what I was going to do. I had my whole life planned out. Then a few monkey wrenches were thrown into the works and my life did not unfold as I had planned. As I get older, I realize the things that I do not know, things were not sure. One has to make choices. One has to force one's way into doing things if one wants to get things done. It is not just going to pop out of the sky. I have to do it for myself.

Although completely lacking in support from her parents and family regarding any serious artistic aspirations, Maureen received some sporadic but critical support from several friends in the art community. Some critical personal successes with her art during her "difficult" period also served to keep her dream alive.

> I did a piece of clay that I really liked. I remember it was a Roman's head. And it was all fired and shiny black. It had an almost religious quality about it.

Maureen was also interested in working with people who allowed her to think. She wanted to be given a certain latitude. She did not want to look after all of the details. The meticulous and "nit picky" details should be assigned to someone else.

> I know I must have wanted to do this or why did I want to take these art courses and apply all this thinking to art school and a justification for taking all these art courses in the past four years? I know that I must have that drive. I doubt my decision sometimes. (The enrolment) is just a very necessary thing. So, more than what I get out of this, I have to do it.

For Heather, the "teaching thing" was always there.

> From the time I was young, I always looked up at a teacher, thinking she was everything, or he was so wonderful. I just had really good luck with really good teachers. I think I always admired them and, I enjoy children. I was hoping as a teacher that I could leave an impression on other kids like the impression that was left on me.

Ian saw a clear pattern in his previous employment of moving, with time, toward the care giving kinds of occupations. He was an adult child of an alcoholic who wished to help others that had experienced similar trauma in their childhood, through his dream of owning a residential centre. His interest in assisting people to develop their full potential resulted from numerous interviews as a personnel practitioner with people who did not realize how great they could be. These people, he noted, had the ability but lacked the critical "people" skills.

Gail mentioned a need for an occupation which utilized the use of words rather than numbers. She expressed a continuing interest throughout her life for a counselling or people related field. A teenage thought to become a

teacher was suppressed by a fear of not being prepared for the challenges upon graduation from university. A burning desire for independence also contributed to the termination of her education earlier than anticipated. After she had abandoned her family, in her early twenties, she felt there was no going back.

Decision-making patterns

In formulating ideas for a new career focus, not surprisingly, the participants drew on previously demonstrated abilities that were both pleasurable and rewarding.

Ian and his wife were both employed by the same large organization in Human Resources. Part of his experience as a personnel practitioner allowed him to design courses in classification and recruitment.

> My wife is currently involved in staff development and we talk a lot about her programs. I became very interested in a number of adult programs, particularly in the human potentials area and felt that was something that I really wanted to do.

He thus chose an educational route to help himself become oriented to the new focus.

Ken had always enjoyed the "people side" of all of his jobs. His work with a children's ministry provided particular fulfilment for him. In choosing the new career focus, he "put all his assets together" and determined what he had to know-- then pursued it. "If you are going to do

something different, I thought it should be something that you really enjoy."

Similarly, Gail consciously pondered past experiences for elements that were both interesting and providing sufficient monetary reward. While working as a clerk for a television station, she yearned to become involved in "television work". As hobbies she became involved in astrological counselling and teaching martial arts. Later, as a government clerk, she aspired to a counselling career. Her intense desire for independence and a need to raise her young son alone, delayed her enrolment in education for the chosen field.

Heather reported that her interest in education was "always there". Several of her childhood teachers mentioned several times that she had the aptitude and ability to become an accomplished teacher. Personal experience in dealing with a school system that would/could not deal appropriately with her gifted daughter focused her interest more into special education.

Both Maureen and Beth were married to successful professionals and the need for monetarily rewarding occupations was not nearly as strong. They, as a result, viewed their educational experiences as self-actualizing. They were now able to do something that they always wanted to do, but, up to now, had not had the chance.

Education - a means to an end

Three of the participants, (Ken, Gail and Heather) who had dependents and limited financial resources, focused initially on determining their future occupational focus, then looked to an educational route as a "means to an end". All three wished to become school teachers. The only route to that profession was through graduation from the Education faculty.

Ian, Beth and Maureen, in contrast, were more financially independent and did not view education from a "preparation for employment" perspective. None of them had experienced any difficulty in obtaining employment previously. For Ian and Maureen, their prior occupations were not overly distasteful to them. Beth's children were now of school age. She wished to enrich her present role as wife and mother with a university education.

Ian, Beth and Maureen focused initially on the choice of a program of study. They were not at all concerned, at least in the short run, about the role of education in opening the doors to meaningful employment.

Education for Education's Sake

The opinions regarding the value of education for education's sake were mixed among the participants in the study.

Ian and Ken noted that education for education's sake

was not that important to them. It was more important for them to ultimately become involved with occupations that would meet their personal interests. The occupations also needed to provide them with opportunities to make a difference to someone else.

In contrast, Beth expressed a concern about learning something that would make a difference to the world. She expressed a deep concern that, after learning about her chosen field, no one else would care.

> Does anyone really care besides me? Is the world really waiting to hear about this stuff---is it really important?

Heather also expressed a zest for an education.

> I really believe in education. People that can go through university and obtain a degree, a masters and a doctorate, that's unbelievable to me. I think that you are kind of an elite. When you think of the population and how many people actually succeeded? I just think that it's something to be really proud of. I think university is just a huge commitment. I think you're a better person for having committed yourself to something.

Career Goals

Heather, Ken, Gail and Ian expressed definite, career aspirations.

For Heather, the need to become an excellent teacher was of paramount concern. She felt that, if she were not able to excel in her new occupation, that she would not stay with it. Her aspirations were to work with small groups of emotionally disturbed children as a resource

consultant, where she had significant control over the curriculum.

Gail valued security and independence. She planned to enrol in extra French courses to increase her marketability as a teaching professional. Her pension earned from employment in the government could be transferred to a teacher's pension. Her personal problems in surviving in a polluted environment sparked an interest in working with children experiencing similar problems. She hoped through her new career to be able to afford to effectively cope with her allergies. She viewed herself as remaining in Education until retirement although she saw herself working as a school librarian or a school counsellor after a few years of teaching.

> I like the idea of having a job where I can deal with ideas, concepts, language, helping people and teaching seems to fit my interest to a great extent.

Ken planned to teach in an elementary school setting until retirement. Ultimately he would like to become involved in administration, again in an elementary school setting.

Ian planned to open a residential centre that offered adult educational courses. He saw himself as the entrepreneur who would contract out for the expertise which he needed. His primary interests were in helping adult children of alcoholics and working in the Human Potentials area.

> It's one of the characteristics of people dwarfing themselves...limiting their own potential and I think a lot of the really fundamental things about understanding it. I'm interested also in a lot of the human "reach" sort of things like creative visualization.

Beth and Maureen were more vague regarding their choice of career upon graduation from university.

Beth noted that she would love to have a career. It was more critical for her to first follow her own interests.

> Sometimes I think I have chosen the wrong thing. What am I getting myself into? On the other hand, I don't know what I'd do if I didn't do this.

Beth, although sceptical about her chances, would love to have a job with the challenge of doing academic research. She would like to be a professor at a university only because of the research aspect. The teaching portion of the occupation did not appeal to her. She did mention that she couldn't stick with anything for any prolonged period of time.

Maureen wished to have a secluded place to study and paint. She aspired to teach art in a community college and have time to create on her own. Employment in a gallery or museum also appealed to her.

<u>Sacrifices to Enrolment</u>

Four of the participants went through major financial and/or life style changes in order to prepare for

university enrolment.

Heather's choice was to give up her house and animals or take in a room mate to help to pay the mortgage. She expressed gratitude in finding a "great" room mate. Entertainment expenses and eat-out lunches have been drastically reduced. She was very concerned regarding the effect that her reduced income and time would have in her relationship with her daughter.

> I'm not finding the financial pressures that bad because my life has changed and I don't spend the money that I did on clothes and the eating-out lunches. I hardly ever go out. My entertainment money is almost to nil. I'm probably living the way I would if I was working, which is something I didn't realize. I am entitled to some subsidies. The Student Loan always covers my day care. I'm a little concerned about the unexpected expenses like Christmas. I used to get a really huge bonus at Christmas time whereas that won't happen this year. Christmas may not be 25 gifts because I'm working towards something that will better both of our lives.

Heather was also concerned about going from a job in which she was in high demand and paid well to a student's life.

> (Before) you're sort of looked on as if you are this incredible person and going back to university meant all of a sudden you're just one of the 30,000 and no one would be patting you on the back for your efforts That loss of being appreciated was another thing.

Gail had received proceeds from the sale of her house

in Ontario that would pay for her university education. She was most concerned about the day care facilities and transportation "nightmares" in getting to university from where she was living. Ken had received some loans and grants from the Student Finance Board. He sold his house and continued to work part-time in retail sales. His wife had gone to work as a teacher's aide.

Ian and his wife had striven for many years to earn, for them, a substantial dollar. They had travelled a lot and spent a lot. At the time of the interview, material possessions were not that important to them. Ian's wife continued to work and Ian also intended to work part-time. One of the greatest concerns that Ian had about going back to university was the loss of status in relinquishing managerial duties to become a part-time personnel practitioner.

Maureen's husband was a physician. The family had a live-in nanny. Her concern was primarily that she provide continued support to her husband and children while attending university. The financial considerations were not critical to the decision to enrol in university.

Beth, in moving from a housewife to student did not mention any major financial hardships in enroling at university.

Reaction to change - spouse and/or children

Both of the men in the study expressed appreciation for their wife's support in their educational endeavours.

Ian and his wife had taken the stance that they would help each other towards their ultimate goals.

> (My wife) is providing me with the opportunity to try to expand my own career growth. This is great. I would like to think that, somewhere along the line I will be able to do the same thing for her, if she wants to go back and that is something that she is very much going to do.

Similarly, Ken's wife had been very supportive. They initially planned for her to go to school, but after some thought decided that he was the one to go.

> My wife's encouragement and our faith in God are the only things that have kept me going.

The two married women in the study did not express the same feelings regarding their husband's support for their new life. For them, the decision to enrol seemed more unilateral. They were going to enrol with or without the support of their husbands.

Beth, when she came out west would apply for jobs for her husband.

> He was a little bit taken aback. I said to him, "you've got until June 1, 1988 because I have to do something." Intellectually, he is very supportive (of my return to school). I've been home for so long that I think that these things (housework) have been forgotten. I think he will have to relearn it.

Beth hoped to someday reciprocate for her husband's sacrifice and support. Her husband has had aspirations to enrol in law school and Beth hopes to be in the position where she can be the principal "bread winner" in the home when her husband returns to school.

Maureen did not mention specifically whether or not her husband had given support to her educational endeavours. However, the family employed a live-in nanny to care for their little girl and to prepare meals. The financial support for her education was not seen as a serious difficulty. Maureen was concerned, however about the emotional support that she could give to her family while enroled in university.

Heather, a single parent, mentioned the monetary sacrifices that she and her daughter would have to assume with the full time pay cheque no longer coming in. Time spent in doing fun things would be lessened also. Heather was not entirely sure how her daughter would react.

In summary, for the participants in the study, the men, when compared to the women, expressed greater support from their spouse for university enrolment.

Barriers to Enrolment

Four of the participants expressed some difficulty with the enrolment procedures at the university.

Maureen, as part of her application procedure, was

asked to obtain transcripts from Spain, which required that she write a letter in Spanish. It had been ten years since she was in Spain so that provided a challenge. A course description from Sir George Williams University in Montreal was delayed because the name of the university had changed to Concordia. In addition, she had to submit a portfolio of her art as a part of the registration procedure.

Ken's average was not high enough to enrol in Education. He had instead to enrol in Arts for a semester and then attempt to become accepted in the Faculty of Education.

Beth wished to enrol in the honours program but lacked one of the necessary prerequisites. Gail experienced only minor difficulties in obtaining transcripts from Ontario.

Heather and Ian did not mention any difficulties with enrolment.

In summary, the difficulties in enroling as an adult student were not insurmountable obstacles for the participants. None of the participants allowed any university bureaucratic difficulties to stop them from enroling in university.

Reaction to Change - Family and Friends

None of the participants considered their parent's reaction seriously when contemplating enrolment at university. Only four of the respondents mentioned it in

the interviews.

Ian's relationship with his parents was not very close. He had neglected to tell his parents, who resided in Eastern Canada, regarding his decision to return to school because he felt that they would not be able to handle it well.

Heather's father was supportive of her returning to school. Her mother and brother thought that people should not do soul searching and career changing at 30 years of age. Her mother thought that the change for Heather was a "midlife thing".

Gail's family had been very supportive of her leaving the pay and benefits job.

> My mother likes the idea of my going back to school a lot. Various of my siblings are extremely positive about it and say they would help. Once I arrived here, I've discovered that my sister only babysits for her friends and is not interested in babysitting for me. I really don't have any support systems here.

Beth's grandmother wanted to know "what I want to prove."

> I was gone for 12 years. My relationship with my brothers and sisters is fairly external to what I do with my life. Two sisters are extremely supportive. My father, I don't know deep down inside what he thinks. My step mother is really supportive. So I haven't really received any flack from my family.

Neither Ken nor Maureen chose to mention the reaction that their parents had to them returning to school.

The response from friends also was not a major contributor to the career change decision, for most of the respondents, although several respondents reported being influenced by them.

Beth left most of her friends behind when she moved back to Alberta.

> I don't think a lot of them felt really good about me up and leaving them. I've been really close friends with people and then to do it for myself, when all of us were used to almost doing everything for the family, that I actually put myself first, I think jarred them a wee bit. Sometimes people think when you choose an alternative course, you are insulting them.

Heather's decision to enrol in university was most profoundly affected by the circumstance of a 40 year old colleague. In talking further about this woman, Heather related:

> I think that my decision affected her most because we were very close. It's kind of like if you are in a bad situation with someone else, it doesn't feel so bad. I was all of a sudden stepping out of the situation. I really felt that Betty felt all alone. The last week that I was at work, our conversations were pretty limited.

Most of Heather's friends and colleagues have respected her decision.

> I have a few lawyer friends that I talk to once in a while. They are really encouraging, because they have been through it. I think that people who have never gone to university; I don't think that they can understand.

She feels that her decision to go back to university

has made other people reassess their own lives.

Ian had some friends who had gone through similar changes in their lives.

> They both resigned, sold their car, sold their house, sold their furniture and moved to Manhattan. They are living in a four hundred square foot apartment. She goes to school. He wasn't sure he could get another job. She is hoping to get into university as an instructor. They are saying "it's (not the piece of paper, it's) the process."

Gail received a lot of negative feedback from a friend who worked for the Unemployment Insurance Commission in counselling regarding her decision to enrol in a field where the demand for new graduates was so bleak.

The reactions from friends, both favourable and unfavourable, did not seem to impact the participant's decision to a great extent. Ian may have been positively influenced to change careers by those friends who had done so in moving to Manhattan.

Apprehensions

All of the participants expressed some concerns regarding enrolment at the University as a mature student.

Beth was somewhat concerned regarding the adjustment that her children would have to make in going to a daycare setting for the first time in their lives.

Gail was mostly concerned about the university library system.

> It seems that everything has grown except

> the libraries. I remember having trouble getting reserve reading stuff and having everything off the stacks when I was a student before. I just dread what is going to happen towards the end of the term.

Ian mentioned feelings of guilt in returning to university.

> I feel as though I should be working, because society says that I should be working.

He was also somewhat apprehensive about leaving the security, status and prestige he had worked so hard to obtain with his previous employer.

Heather was especially concerned about doing well in university.

> As a secretary, I could tell you anything that one needed to know. The hardest soul searching was "am I smart enough?" Can I compete with these keeners from high school? I was so insecure. I never considered that the experience of being out in the real world could be of benefit. The other thing was the loss of income.

Life Change - Education

Heather was the only one who noted a significant change in her life as a result of enroling in university.

Many of the friends that Heather cherished during her previous career were expected to disappear as a result of her return to school.

> When I worked, I lived for my weekend. I lived for the one night out with the girls or on a date. Now it's just not that important to me. I am looking forward to

> Christmas, when I am finished all my finals. That's when I plan to relax, mellow out and talk to friends.
>
> My dating has gone to nil. The men friends do not understand it. They think that everyone, whether you are in university or not you can afford to go out for supper or a show and stuff. I just don't feel that a lot of my friends understand. We are different now. Our goals are different. I don't think that they have changed. I think I have changed. I'm worried about Christmas. What do you do? Phone these people up and say "now I've got 2 weeks off"----well tough!!!

Feelings of Freedom

Both Ian and Heather identified a feeling of freedom as a result of returning to school.

Ian looked forward to the challenge of returning to school.

> I really feel as though I'm giving it my personal best and that I can do it by utilizing my own resources and not having to be constrained by external factors that are saying "we have to consider these things".

Heather experienced similar feelings.

> I think the thing that I enjoy the most is the freedom of being in control. I will do as well as I want to do. There's no one there telling me to do this or that. I know in my heart that it was the right decision, but I think university as a 30 year old is much different than university as an 18 year old.

The Degree as opposed to the Process

The participant responses were varied when it came to ascertaining which was most important ---- the degree at

the end of the studies or the process through which one must go.

Both Ken and Gail had dependents to support. The degree was very much the means to the desired end. The educational process was primarily viewed as a "hoop to jump through". Any adventure or self-discovery was only briefly considered.

On the other hand, Ian viewed his educational experience very much as a process:

> I want to achieve some goals that are important to me, (take an) opportunity to grow and experience life, but the main goal is just making a shift in attempting it. If it doesn't work out, that's not important.
>
> It's very important for the transition at my age to start moving in the desired direction. In the end it's more the process it's not the end product, it is the process, it's more the adventure.

He felt that he could always go back to personnel with his previous employer --- and that would not be too bad an alternative. Beth was excited about being back at university. She had been through this before.

> Education is really wasted on the young. A lot of times when you are 18 or 19 years old, you haven't had the life experience that can actually make the course material relative to what life is like.
>
> I'm not even interested that much in where it's going to lead me as far as getting a job. I'm interested in it for its own sake. I just want to know the answers to the questions and then if I get a job in the end that will be good. If I don't, I don't know what I will do.

Maureen was interviewed after university had started. She related some of the feelings she was experiencing:

> I've never been resistant to having to learn certain things. I feel like I know what's going on. It seems like this year, that my English seems to be fitting in things that I just happened to pick up this summer. Art history fits in with English. I see the inter-connections of all these things. I really get excited. I'm practically floating..in my philosophy class my heart is pounding sometimes. I feel like I'm in a banquet. I've been starved for 20 years and I have to be careful not to gorge myself."

Maureen too, was not concerned about the paper..."it's the experience".

Heather demonstrated excitement regarding enrolment at university.

> The thing that I love the most about university is it really does make you aware of how little you know and I love to learn. I'm so excited about learning new things and I think university and education are great!

THEMES

The transcripts were reread to obtain some insight into the themes which reflect these participants' understanding of the move from previous work to education as a form of career change or transition.

Three major themes emerged from this process: the willingness to risk, diverted opportunities, and the sense

of mission.

Willingness to Risk

Each of the participants had a great deal to risk in abandoning an old lifestyle and moving forward into a new life of uncertainty.

Ian was living the "good" life - new cars, fancy home, job status, affluent friends, exotic trips, ... To return to school, he had to give up a significant amount of income, benefits and status. His move into a new life would likely meet the disapproval of his parents and some of his friends. Would he be able to "make it" at school after being away from higher education for so long? Could he compete with fellow students who were younger and more accustomed to studying? How would he be treated by his younger classmates and professors who may also be younger? Yes, he could move back into personnel work if the education experiment failed, but he would have to work his way back to management, without any guarantees. How would he be treated if he came back after failing at university?

Ian's monetary sacrifice was not as significant as some of the other participants, because his wife had a good job and they had no children. But, at 45 years old, he felt that it was now or never for him to take the risk. He felt that his health may decline after he reached 50 years

and that he may not have the energy or stamina to attempt schooling in a few years.

Heather was very successful and in high demand for her legal secretarial skills. Her income supported a comfortable lifestyle for her small family. She was popular within the legal community. She had a fair amount of time to spend with her daughter. To enrol in higher education, she may have to lose her home and animals, lose touch with the good friends that she had been able to develop through work, and spend less time with her daughter who had experienced some tough times at school. How would her daughter react to less time spent with Mom and less money to spend? How could she deal with her security conscious mother and brother who placed little value on a university education? What would happen if the demand was low for special education teachers when Heather graduates? Could she go back to legal secretarial work after her educational experiences? Would she be able to meet her need for success in the teaching profession as well as she had in the legal secretarial field?

A primary motivating force for Heather was in seeing herself in ten years as being in the same situation as her forty year old co-worker. She viewed education as an escape from the legal secretarial field. She felt that she had reached the plateau in her former occupation and needed new challenges.

Beth had developed good friendships in the Ontario town where she resided with her family. Her husband had a good job and the children seemed happy. She had made a difference through her work with the Caesarian group. By assertively stating that she was moving to Alberta, she risked break up of her family unit. Her husband could have chosen to remain in Eastern Canada and she would have lost the financial and emotional support that he provided. Her husband's new job in Alberta may not work out. Since Beth and her family were in Ontario for an extended period of time, she would have to re-orient herself to her family and develop new friendships in the new city. Her children would have to enrol in daycare for the first time in their lives. How would they react?

For Beth, the need to return to the university environment and the city life was stronger and more compelling than the sacrifices and risks that she would have to take.

Gail had an unappealing job that only satisfied her highly valued need for security. Her asthma and behavioral difficulties with her son added to her misery. Her physician recommended that she move to Western Canada for its cleaner air and healthier lifestyle. Any occupational success that she had experienced was in the Pay and Benefits field. Would her asthma disappear if she moved to Alberta? Could she meet all of her family needs while

attending university? Would her son's behavioral problems disappear once he moved to Alberta? Would she be able to succeed in education? Would there be demand for her expertise once she graduated?

For Gail, life was so miserable in Ontario that she had to uproot virtually every aspect of her life and make a new start ------a new educational and occupational challenge, a new healthier environment, a fresh start for her son.

Ken had moved from job to job, trying to make ends meet for his wife and two children. His wish was to remain the principal wage earner in the household at least until his children were older. He seemed intent on obtaining an occupation which would fulfil his need for security and also provide an avenue in which to utilize his talents and interests. His choices were to keep his house, allow his wife to remain in the home and try to find suitable employment to pay the bills, or to send either himself or his wife to school to re-train for a more secure, well paying profession. After much thought and deliberation Ken and his wife decided that they would sell their home, that they both would obtain part time employment and that Ken would enrol in university.

The demand for educators in elementary education is somewhat turbulent. Ken pursued his dream despite the uncertainty whether he would obtain employment when he

obtained his degree. He sold the house to finance his education and was not certain when he would be able to afford housing in the future.

Maureen's concerns for the financing of her education seemed to be minimal when compared to the other participants. Her risks were more emotional in nature. She was concerned that she would not be able to provide the emotional support to her husband and children while she was enroled in university. She was pursuing an interest that was repeatedly discouraged in her childhood by her significant others. Would she be able to feel success and overcome the emotional scars that were inflicted on her when she attempted to pursue a career in art at earlier times in her life? Perhaps it would have been much easier to remain in her instructional position in medical laboratory technology, and to paint as a hobby in her spare time.

Each of the participants had unique, and significant issues to confront when deciding to enrol in university. All decided that the benefits of a university education were worth the sacrifice whether monetary, social, or emotional.

Diverted Opportunities

Many of the participants chose to pursue educational experiences that were based on previous interests and

successes that had been stifled in earlier years.

After obtaining her degree in Anthropology and English, Gail had given thought to pursuing her teaching certificate. A strong desire for independence caused her instead to embark on a working career immediately. Now, fifteen years later she has enroled in education.

Beth had valiantly attempted to pursue a university education in Ontario before having her children. She commuted to Toronto on a weekly basis, only returning to her home on weekends in order to make the necessary sacrifice. As parental responsibility precluded her from once again commuting to Toronto, she decided to move her family to Alberta, so that she could be close to her parents and siblings as well as enrol in university.

Maureen had a compelling desire to practice art virtually all of her life. She left home at an early age when her mother continued in her efforts to discourage Maureen's artistic pursuits. Several attempts at art school were interrupted by financial difficulties. Now, when she finally had the necessary support systems in place, she has enroled in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program.

Heather disclosed when, as a child, she had great admiration and respect for her teachers. She placed individuals that possessed university degrees on a pedestal. Now, as an adult, she aspires to become a great

teacher and role model for children.

All of the women in the study were enroled in programs that would fulfil previous aspirations that were thwarted by outside forces in earlier years.

Sense of Mission

All of the participants sensed that they had unique talents and abilities to make a difference in their lives.

Ian wished to help Adult Children of Alcoholics because of the trauma he had experienced in his childhood. He wished to help people who were "dwarfing" themselves and to share his successful strategies with others. As a personnel practitioner, he felt that he could not make this difference in others. The need to help others was stronger than his propensity to live the "good" life.

Ken was touched by his experience as an administrator in the children's church. He loved to tell biblical stories to the children of his congregation. As an elementary educator, he would be able to continue to utilize his talents and interests in his vocation.

Heather's daughter was gifted. Regrettably she experienced some difficulties in a school system that could not deal effectively with giftedness. Heather greatly admired teachers and wished to combine her interest in teaching with the knowledge she had gained regarding giftedness by becoming a teacher in special education.

Maureen was born to be an artist. From early childhood she strove to create artistically despite severe opposition from her mother. Now, nearing her fortieth birthday, she has an opportunity to fulfil her lifelong dream.

Beth hungered for a university education. Despite sporadic attempts and substantial obstacles she continued toward her dream of a university education by finding her husband a job in a university city and moving her family out west.

Gail had a talent for teaching, and counselling which she fulfilled through Tai Chi and astrological counselling while still embroiled in pay and benefits work. With her asthmatic difficulties she also wished to make others' lives easier through holistic techniques. She felt that her life would have been much easier had she received some quality career counselling while in her formative years. She aspired to touch young people and share her expertise in these areas.

Each participant had a unique combination of talents that they wished to utilize in a vocational setting.

Summary

The six students who were interviewed provided a rich description of their decision making processes regarding career change and educational routes.

All of the participants received parental guidance regarding career direction in their formative years. Interestingly, all of the participants attempted to follow their parent's suggestions and have enroled at university to find something which is more interesting and rewarding.

Several of the participants, in wanting to change, had moved or wished to move to another part of Canada.

Outside forces impacted on many of the participant's choices. Responsibilities to family both as a bread winner and role model were important to several of the participants.

All of the participants were dissatisfied with their work roles. Boredom, lack of meaning, insufficient earning potential, psychosomatic illness, and lack of self-esteem were the primary dissatisfiers that were noted by the participants.

The students reported a need to make a difference in the world as a primary rationale for changing career direction. Three of the participants wished to exert their influence in the classroom. The others wanted to make a difference through artistic expression, exposure of a possible medical scam and assisting adults in reaching their potential.

For most, it was imperative that they act now before it was too late. Concerns regarding ill health, inertia, earning potential, self esteem and self-expression were

noted.

In making a decision regarding career direction and educational paths, the students chose to reflect inwards to ascertain individual strengths and interests, rather than to seek professional assistance with career planning.

Three participants, because of financial concerns, viewed education as a means to an end. The other three, to some extent saw great value in education for education's sake.

Most of the students had clear vocational goals to be pursued at the end of their university experience.

The men in the study had complete support from their spouses regarding the educational experience. The women who were married reported less support from their husbands in this regard.

The university bureaucracy did not provide much of a hindrance to the students.

Three themes emerged from the data: the willingness to risk, diverted opportunities, and the sense of mission.

Each of the participants faced significant risks in deciding to give up their present lifestyle for the uncertainty of university enrolment and future career paths.

Two of the participants had to alter their living arrangements to finance their education. Two other participants uprooted their families to come to Alberta for

their university education. Several of the respondents chose to give up significant status and security to change their focus.

Many of the participants, in choosing an educational focus, decided to follow earlier inclinations that were previously thwarted by parents, lack of financial resources, and/or lack of self esteem. Some had as their primary motive, a strong urge to learn; others to find meaningful work. They chose to utilize skills and talents that had previously been manifested in earlier years but now were channelled into different occupational directions.

Each of the participants felt in some way that they were meant to take an alternate direction in their lives. They sensed that they had unique talents and abilities that could be better utilized in other vocations.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the purpose, research methodology and major findings of this study; reflections from the literature in addition to personal reflections; and implications for practice and research.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the concerns, issues and processes that were involved in the decision of middle-aged individuals to abandon previous careers and enrol as mature undergraduate students at a large Canadian university.

Methodology

The study was based on an interpretive research design utilizing a qualitative methodology and naturalistic enquiry. It was exploratory in that there was little information available on higher education as a tool for career change. The meanings held by the respondents were seen as being the focus of this study. Thus the research was directed towards a search for understanding rather than

a formulation of conclusions and generalizations regarding mature university students and career change.

Ten individuals that volunteered to participate in the study at two orientation sessions for mature undergraduate students were interviewed after consent forms were signed guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. Because of the vast quantity of data generated in the interviews and time constraints associated with the analysis, it was decided, in order to conduct a comprehensive data analysis, that the remainder of the study be limited to six respondent interviews. Four respondents were separated out on the basis of age (under thirty), nature of the contemplated occupational change (elementary teacher to kindergarten teacher and communication consultant to writer specializing in women's issues), and part-time university enrolment. Those enroled part time continued to work full time in their previous occupation.

The interviews were semi-structured to enable the researcher to probe for more detailed information. Open-ended questions enabled the researcher to obtain thorough explanations from the mature students regarding personal interpretations of aspects of their career development.

After the interviews, transcripts of the tapes were made and sent to the participants for their review.

Data were gathered from the interview transcripts and subjected to content analysis in order to develop specific

categories and themes for discussion related to the research questions. To ensure trustworthiness of the data, the researcher utilized peer review, confirmation and member checks.

Major findings

The data were grouped within a framework which addressed two aspects of the major research question in the study: 1) the reasons for deciding to change careers and 2) the decision to enrol in higher education.

Decision to Change Careers

All of the participants, in choosing initial occupations, followed parental advice. Now they have all enroled in university to prepare for occupations that promise to be more rewarding from their own perspectives.

Several of the participants, in wanting to make a change, had moved or planned to move to other parts of Canada.

Responsibilities to family both as bread winner and role model were important to several of the participants.

All participants were dissatisfied with their work roles. Boredom, lack of meaning, insufficient earning potential, reaching the job plateau, psychosomatic illness,

and lack of self esteem were the primary sources of dissatisfaction that were noted by the participants.

The mature students noted a need to make a difference in the world as a primary reason for abandoning old occupations and seeking new direction. Three of the participants wished to influence youth in the class room. The others wanted to make a difference through artistic expression and appreciation, exposure of a possible medical scam, and assisting troubled adults in reaching their potential.

For most, it was imperative that they act before it was too late. Concerns over ill health, inertia, earning potential, self esteem and self expression were highlighted.

Occupational and Educational Choice

In deciding future educational and occupational direction, the participants chose to reflect inwards in ascertaining individual strengths and interests rather than seeking professional assistance with career planning.

The participants were split in the opinion as to whether education had primary value in and of itself or as a means to an end.

Most of the participants had clear vocational goals to

be pursued at the end of their university experience.

The men in the study had complete support from their spouses regarding the educational commitment. The women who were married reported less support from their husbands in this regard.

The university bureaucracy did not provide much of a hindrance to the students on enrolment.

Themes

The transcripts were reread to obtain insight into themes which reflect the participants understanding of the move from previous work to education as a form of career change or transition.

Each of the participants faced significant risks in deciding to give up their present lifestyle for the uncertainty of university enrolment and future career paths.

Two of the participants chose to alter their living arrangements to finance their education. Two more uprooted their families from Ontario to enrol in university. Several chose to give up status, security and significant incomes to enrol in university.

Many of the participants, in choosing an educational focus, decided to follow earlier inclinations that were

thwarted by parents, lack of finances and/or lack of self esteem. They chose to utilize skills and talents that had been manifested in earlier years but now were channelled into different occupational directions.

Each of the participants felt that they were meant to embark on different directions in their lives. They sensed that they had unique experiences, talents and abilities that could be better utilized in other vocations.

REFLECTIONS ON THE LITERATURE AND STUDY FINDINGS

The purpose of this section is not to present a comprehensive discussion of the relevant literature. Rather it is meant to review key concepts and issues that have emerged.

Larsen (1984) provided a good summary of career development theories that are relevant to the study. Career development theorists generally agree that a career proceeds through a series of stages which present different challenges and require different responses. As the individuals move through these stages, their career interests, problems and modes of behavior gradually change.

One of the more comprehensive theories of career development is the work of Super (1957 and 1970). He states that career socialization follows a sequence similar

to that of personality development. Career development is viewed as a continuous, orderly and generally predictable process, and like personality development, career development is a dynamic process of integration and individualization. Career progression results from the interaction of various sociological, psychological and economic forces. The importance of these influences varies at different stages in the individuals' life.

Over time, the individual formulates aspirations and experiences varying degrees of success which result in increasingly realistic career goals. The individual eventually works out a compromise between his fantasies of success in the career and the real world of work. Super believes that an individual's career satisfactions depend on the extent to which he can find outlets in his work for his abilities, interests, values, and personality characteristics.

Phillips (1982) has separated career development theorists into two categories:

1) Traditional Career Development Theorists (Ginzberg, Ginsberg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) and Super (1957) took as their focus the entire spectrum of behaviours and processes displayed during the course of a life span. Exploration is portrayed as a primary mode of normal functioning during early stages of career development. Exploration occurs primarily in pre-implementation stages

of development. The manner in which one functions during later stages is presumed to be contingent on the extent to which one has adequately explored in earlier stages of life.

2) The new theorists such as Borders & Archadel (1987) and Crow (1987) look at the molecular level of the decision as a vehicle through which to view vocational behaviours and development. Any decision goes through an exploratory phase in which available alternatives are generated, elaborated and "tried on for size". This would suggest that exploration would be inevitable throughout all points in an individual's career. Exploratory behaviour does occur in adulthood, although its incidence appears to decrease with age.

Levinson (1978) suggested that mid-career shifts would most likely occur during the "Becoming One's Own Man" Stage (35-39 years). Ken made his shift during this stage. Ian made the shift at forty five years which was in agreement with Haase (1983).

Sheehy (1981) used the term "Catch 30" to describe the period that typically occurs between the ages of twenty eight and thirty three, when the first sense of stagnation and discontent ordinarily sets in. People typically reappraise relationships, reassess earlier decisions about career and family and then either reorder their commitments or intensify them. She termed the early thirty stage, from

thirty three to thirty five as "Rooting and Extending".

The "Deadline Decade", from ages thirty five to forty five, is a period in which both men and women discover that mortality is real and time begins to press in. As the gaps between our youthful illusions and current state are examined, the same confusion and fears that were thought to be left behind in adolescence appear again. This inner turmoil has become known as the midlife crisis and is often concentrated between the ages of thirty eight and forty three for men. Sheehy believed that, in women, the turmoil may begin as early as thirty five.

Heather and Beth commenced their career shifts in the late twenties and early thirties. Gail and Maureen made their shifts during the mid to late thirties.

Boisen (1936) believed career adaptation to involve three stages: 1) abandon old centre 2) self-distress (disorganization of one's world) and 3) assume new centre. For the participants in the study, the first two stages were intermingled. Ian gradually found, over a period of several years, that the meaning associated with his former profession was becoming eroded. Ken, on the other hand, experienced a more prolonged distress that was associated with trying to support his family through a series of volatile occupational shifts. For Ken, there was not a stable "old centre" to abandon. The career shift was largely due to the need to find a stable occupation that,

for the most part, matched his interests, values and skills.

Heather felt trapped in an occupation which provided no challenge. Gail exhibited many of the symptoms of burnout prior to leaving her job as a pay and benefits clerk. Maureen changed focus in large part to fulfil unmet childhood dreams and aspirations.

Flexman (1982) noted that a career change is not one distinct type of event. The change may originate in the environment (economic conditions) or in the individual. Ken and possibly Gail changed primarily due to environmental conditions whereas the remaining participants experienced change that was primarily individual in origin. All viewed their career shift as a positive challenge.

The literature which is directly relevant to the research problem falls into three general categories: self-concept in the change process; multiple careers and mid-life career change; and higher education as a tool for career change.

SELF CONCEPT IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

Piebrofesa and Splett (1975) proposed that individuals implement their self concepts by choosing to pursue a career that will allow for self-expression. The expression of self is considered a motivating force in evaluating the

attractiveness of an occupation. The selection of an occupation is perceived within a framework of general personality development, that is, how one sees the self and surrounding world. Thus, self-perceptions can be highly predictable of occupational choice and eventual career development. As the individual grows older, he/she integrates the various pictures of self into a consistent self-concept which he/she tries to preserve and enhance through all activities but primarily through occupational activities. An attempt is made to select an occupation which will be compatible with the self-concept and will allow the individual to make it a reality by permitting him/her to play the role that is desired.

Maureen sought self-expression through her art, and was even unsure about selling her art since it "changed it". The other participants were less concerned about expressing themselves and focused on their own skills which they saw as a reflection of themselves as care givers.

Bandura (1977) proposed that beliefs about one's abilities to perform a particular behaviour are the primary influence on behaviour and behaviour change. Based on efficacy expectation, an individual decides whether or not to attempt a behaviour, for how long and with what degree of effort. Persons who have low self efficacy expectations then may not attempt a behaviour even if they perceive that performing it may produce desired outcomes. Instead these

people dwell on their deficiencies, see challenging situations as threats, and experience high levels of anxiety. Persons with high self-efficacy expectations experience less anxiety, explore options more freely and change behaviour more successfully.

Ian, Gail, Beth and Maureen had previous experience in university studies and were not overly concerned regarding their success in their studies and future vocational choices. For Ken and Heather, university enrolment was a new experience which they both viewed as a challenge. Both had experienced some success in previous vocational pursuits which would enhance their self-images.

Borders and Archadel (1987) noted that beliefs about self and self worth help define the meaning and purpose one sees in life and how that vision is translated into action. Most of the participants in the study viewed themselves as being willing and able to make a significant difference in their world. Beth seemed motivated by socio-political causes and, at the time of the interview, wished to expose a possible medical scam. Ian wished to assist adult children of alcoholics. Ken, Gail and Heather wanted to positively influence children in the classroom. Maureen, whose primary motive was self development in her career shift, also wished to help others develop artistic talent and gain appreciation for art.

O'Hare and Bentall (1987) found male career changers

to be challenged in their decision making. Women career shifters needed strong support networks of family and friends and felt that they would have to become superwomen to become successful. In this study, the two men were most appreciative of the support they received from their spouses. The two divorcees as well as the two married women did not rely so heavily on the support of significant others and were more assertive in ensuring that they got what they felt they needed.

Murphy and Burck (1976) found the years 35 to 45 to be a period of serious personal reflection. For Ian, Gail and Maureen, this was certainly true. Ken's wife was originally going to return to school instead of him --- his decision appeared to be more impulsive. Heather and Beth were also self-reflective but at younger ages.

MULTIPLE CAREERS AND MID LIFE CAREER CHANGE

Thomas (1979) divided theories to explain mid-life career change into three major categories:

1) Counter Culture Hypothesis: Dissatisfaction with present social system has led individuals to leave the mainstream of society

2) Developmental Hypothesis: Men at age 40 undergo a midlife transition in which career goals and personal goals become unsettled. Resurgence of the dream and personal

crisis

3) Macrosocial Explanation: Focus on changes that have taken place in the larger society make career change more possible and desirable.

Although none of the participants in the study seemed to fit with the counter-cultural hypothesis, elements of the developmental and macro social hypotheses formed segments of each of the participant's rationales for shifting. It was not easy to segregate the participant's reason for change into one distinct hypothesis.

Crow (1987) in a study of working women, noted two necessary factors for precipitation of a mid-life crisis for working women: 1) feelings of being trapped (lifestyle claustrophobia) and 2) acute awareness of mortality.

For Beth and Heather, Crow's views certainly fit. Gail was motivated more by an escape from a bad job and a desire for security. She needed to move into a vocation that would facilitate transfer of pensionable service and a comfortable retirement. Maureen did not feel entrapped. She however needed to resolve some issues that related back to her childhood.

Betz (1982), in studying women contemplating career change, noted five stages:

1) feeling trapped, powerless and not in control

2) first career change - not thought out, not rational, but with exhilarating feelings of freedom

3) multiple and rapid occupational changes that were primarily impulsive

4)rational planning - return to reality, serious determination of what the person wants.

5) implement the plan - the crisis is over

For the female participants, some of the elements within the stages were relevant, although the sequence did not fit. None of the participants experienced multiple and rapid occupational changes that were mostly impulsive.

Herr and Cramer (1979) noted that eight percent of Americans change careers every year. Forty percent of these are over thirty five years of age. Among the twenty six leading causes of career shifts are the following which are related to mid life career change:

1) Initial career not own choice.

In the study only Heather, Beth and Gail became involved in a vocation that was not their own choice. Heather became involved in legal secretarial work initially with the purpose of supporting her husband while he went to university. Beth's plans for university education and a vocation were stalled when she became pregnant. Gail drifted into pay and benefits work due to lack of opportunities to utilize her undergraduate degree in anthropology.

2) The purpose of the first career has been accomplished.

Ian, Heather, Maureen, Beth and Gail felt that they had

reached the top of their vocations and were becoming stagnant. Ken was laid off from his previous job and had to seek alternative means of making a living.

3) Satisfaction for higher needs was desired.

Ian, Heather, Maureen and Beth sought vocations where they could make a difference in the world. Ken and Gail were primarily motivated by a need to survive in a well paying vocation.

4) Insufficient challenge in previous work.

Ian, Beth and Heather sought greater challenges in their work.

5) Previous work too physically demanding.

Only Ken and Gail wished to obtain employment in a vocation that was less physically demanding.

6) Social status.

Heather was motivated by the need to be viewed as a professional.

Schwarzwald and Shoham (1981), in studying workers who were contemplating retraining, noted three major reasons for career change.

1) Compliance: (those fired and/or those unhealthy and/or those immigrants whose skills are not needed.) Typically these individuals need immediate economic reward or are under social pressure. Typically, any accessible profession that ensures economic security or freedom from social pressure may be chosen. The effort that the

individual would expend in predecisional job data collection or self testing would be minimal.

2) Identification: (Vocational choices mirror esteemed models and provide a satisfying self image.) Features of the profession, glamour, earnings, positive evaluation of family and friends, provide incentives for vocational imitation. The essence of the profession is peripheral and subordinate. The individual has a definite desire for a particular job. Vocational suitability and genuine vocational interest are not necessarily essential.

3) Internalization: Internalized attitudes and behaviour would be expressed only where the individual is convinced that they are reasonable, relevant and in accordance with the individual's value system. The potential for the new profession to actualize previously unconsummated ambitions and to more fully realize personal capabilities would have to be established. Also, the new profession would have to provide more challenging and improved working conditions. At this level, the suitability of the profession, the interest in its various features and the anticipated benefits are more thoroughly and carefully examined. Internalized motivation will ensure more fruitful retraining due to greater preselection and interest. Decreased susceptibility to attribution of failure and adaptive problems to external sources would also result.

Retraining at the compliance level is conceptually

similar to inhibitory or regressive growth factors such as safety and security. Retraining at the identification level represents higher needs on Maslow's Hierarchy---belonging and self-esteem. Retraining at internalization level parallels the desire for self-fulfilment.

In essence, Ken, Gail and Heather sought to be retrained as teachers. The primary motives were found to be compliance (Ken), identification (Heather) and internalization (Ken, Heather, and Gail).

Isaacson (1981) believed that mid career change occurs when the attractiveness of the new position and the expectation of successful entry is greater than the force to remain in the present position. He noted the causes of change to be:

1) new career enhances probability of satisfying long held dreams. Maureen, Heather, Beth and Ian sought more meaning in their lives through occupational choice.

2) interests and needs have changed. Ian, Heather, and Maureen felt some stagnation in their jobs and sought different challenges in work.

3) change in family pressures or circumstances. Beth felt that her children had matured to the point that she was not needed full time in the home. Her need to attend university was greater than her desire to remain as a home maker.

4) perceived change in societal attitudes toward the

occupation.

5) mutation in work setting (new boss, relocation, technical change).

None of the participants mentioned that change in societal attitudes or mutation in the work setting were important in their decision to change.

Thomas (1979), in a study of mid life career changers who moved from high status careers, found that 76% of the sample changed to find more meaningful work; 69% sought a better fit between their values and their work; 11% changed for a better salary; and 13% changed for better security. Although only Ian could be said to have moved from a high status career, all sought more meaningful work which closer matched their personal values. Only Ken sought work that offered more security. Gail and Ken sought better salaries.

Entine (1977) broke down reasons for career change into a matrix of two dichotomies: anticipated versus unanticipated; and internal versus external.

Anticipated-Internal individuals are involved in labour force re-entry or voluntary career change. In the study, Ian, Beth, Heather and Maureen would fit into this category.

Unanticipated-Internal individuals are affected by serious illness, divorce and/or death of a family member. Gail would fit within this category.

Unanticipated-External individuals are affected by forced unemployment and/or job obsolescence. Ken would fit within this category.

None of the participants fit into the Anticipated-External box which involved planned retirement, or promotion.

Clopton, in 1973, identified three types of career shifters:

1) Type A: changes careers as a direct consequence of some major event that impels the shifter to reformulate the meaning of life. Gail switched career focus due to the development of asthma while working in a stressful job.

2) Type B: shifts as a result of the gradual disenchantment with the previous career. Ken drifted from one meaningless job to another and sought meaning and stability in his life. Ian and Heather gradually lost interest in their jobs.

3) Type C: enjoyed the previous career but found a second job that would give as much and possibly more satisfaction. Typically the second career began with an avocational interest and developed gradually to the point of becoming a full time commitment. Although Maureen enjoyed teaching and Beth loved spending time with her children, both sought greater rewards through new career directions. Maureen had dabbled in art as a hobby and Beth had worked with the Caesarian Group before deciding to formally change career direction.

Brown (1974) noted that vocational decision making in mid-life is much more complex, soul rending, and fearsome than at the adolescent or retirement stages. Failure to develop an adequate and effective life planning process before middle age may seriously hamper the individual's capacity to deal with the forces of mid life. Ken and Heather, because they had not previously attended university, seemed more apprehensive than the rest of the participants regarding their abilities to cope in a higher learning environment. All of the participants, however, had drifted into career directions that they felt were not adequately planned.

Thomas (1980) developed a typology of midlife career changers.

1) Drift outs have low external pressure to leave former careers and are not highly motivated to leave them. Drift outs were least likely to make decisions in a short time. None of the participants in the study were drift outs.

2) Opt Outs have low external pressure but are highly motivated to change. They most frequently utilize formal education in preparation for change. Opt outs were most motivated by a desire to harmonize values and work. Gail, Ian, Maureen, Beth and Heather most closely fit within the Opt Out category.

3) Force outs are unmotivated to change but have high external pressure to change. They have the least amount of

education in preparation for their first career. Force outs are least likely to utilize formal education in pursuing career change. Force outs took the least time to consider career change before actually doing it (6 months) but had the most radical change. Ken seemed to exhibit Opt Out qualities but was motivated more than the rest of the participants to meet the temporal needs of his family. He and his wife spent the least amount of time in considering a change in career focus.

4) Bow outs have high internal and external pressure to make a change. Bow outs have the highest amount of prior education. Neapolitan (1980) noted that dissatisfaction results from a lack of congruence between a person's work orientation and the rewards of an occupation and attraction results from a perceived congruence between the two. Obstacles to change are mostly financial in nature and can delay or defer change even when dissatisfaction and attraction exist. Differing personal beliefs about the control one has over ones' life and one's ability to succeed in new areas in large part determine whether obstacles deter change or not. Most changers are primarily seeking increased intrinsic rewards. Mid-life changers are rational, well adjusted people.

Neapolitan (1980) also noted four factors which were important to mid career occupational change.

1) factors associated with the first occupation

2) factors associated with the second and subsequent occupations

3) obstacles to change

4) personal factors

Ian, Heather and Gail seemed to fit closest with Neapolitan's ideas. Ian and Heather, in particular, felt that the rewards of the previous occupation were not sufficient to continue in that field.

HIGHER EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR CAREER CHANGE

Chapman (1986) studied married mature students returning to university but without a career focus.

Houle (1961) identified three classes of adult learners.

1) Goal Oriented Learner learns to accomplish specific objectives. The activity oriented learner chooses to learn to develop social contacts and relationships with others. The learning oriented individual learns for the sheer pleasure of acquiring knowledge for its own sake.

Ian, Gail and Ken could be classified as goal oriented learners, whereas Heather, Beth and Maureen could be classified as learning oriented learners.

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) investigated adults interested in learning as a means of making a successful job or career change. Approximately 60% felt that they had

to learn something in order to make a transition to a new job or career. They felt that some identifiable event triggers an adult's decision to learn at a particular point in time. The need, the opportunity and the desire are necessary but not sufficient. Something must happen to convert a latent learner into an active learner. The effect of the event is to cause the adult to begin learning at that point in time rather than at an earlier or later point. The researchers found that twice as many men as women learn because of career changes. As incomes rise, adults learn more for career reasons. As occupational level rises, the adults also learn more for career reasons.

Gail's asthma and Ken's serious employment difficulties were significant events that stimulated their enrolment in university. Alternatively, Heather, Beth, Ian and Maureen experienced a slow, gradual dissatisfaction with their lives rather than a single, distinct event.

Cross (1981) noted that in most studies of adult learning interests, over half of the respondents say that they are learning in order to get a new job, advance in their present job, or get better job. A majority of people interested in upward mobility in the labour market think that education is the best way to achieve their goal.

Ian, Ken, Heather and Gail viewed education as a route to a career change. Maureen and Beth were not primarily motivated by occupational concerns.

Ladan (1976) studied groups of male and female mature students. Each gender group was found to choose goals in accordance with sex stereotypes. Mature men who return to university do not pursue "feminine goals". Their objectives are largely traditional, that is, men continued their education for career oriented reasons. Women were seeking more personal goals than higher education.

For the participants in the study, this was, partially true. Ian sought an occupation that was not "feminine", whereas Ken chose an occupational field that has been dominated by women. Both men were considered to be career-oriented. Beth, Maureen, and to a lesser extent Heather sought personal goals primarily. Gail was clearly career-oriented. Heather and Beth placed a higher value on higher education than did the other participants.

Bursey (1985), in studying reasons why adults returned to university, found that most returned to prove something to themselves and to fulfil a need to change. Feelings of vagueness, unhappiness and no purpose to life were predominant.

Ian, Gail, Maureen, and Beth had experienced success in university before and did not express a need to prove something to themselves through enrolment in university. Ken and Heather viewed higher education as a challenge because they had not experienced a university education previously. All of the participants mentioned feelings of

vagueness, unhappiness and lack of purpose in their lives.

Thompson (1987) noted that adults come to university to obtain a "quality of life" experience. They perceived great value to be associated with a university education.

Maureen, Beth, Ian, and Heather viewed university as a "quality of life" experience. Ken and Gail viewed university primarily as a means to an end -- to be able to be employed as teachers.

Frederickson, Macy and Vickers (1978) noted the primary barriers to change to be lack of self confidence, reluctance to risk and health concerns.

Gail was motivated by health concerns to seek a new life through occupation change.

CONCLUSION

Most of the findings of the study support the literature. It is apparent that career change is not a distinct event, but rather a process. Although it is possible to identify common themes amongst career changers, everyone has a unique story to tell.

Very little of the literature surveyed related to feelings associated with: the abandonment of old careers, concerns over loss of status and loss of identity.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

While undertaking this study, I frequently reflected upon my own experiences as a life traveller and career development consultant. My thoughts turned to the factors and issues that I believed were critical in choosing an appropriate vocation. In the process of reviewing the interview transcripts I continually rethought, reassessed and reaffirmed the assumptions and beliefs that I possessed. Many of the struggles that the participants had encountered were similar to experiences that I had. Some were very different which caused me deep reflection.

The study raised questions for me regarding the meaning of the term career. When formulating the thesis proposal, "career" related primarily to work-related life experiences. Current definitions relate career to total life experience. Career has become a non-term.

In studying adult learners, I have discovered first hand how difficult it is to precisely predict adult behaviour. The study demonstrated to me, however, that certain behaviours and activities are likely to occur during different phases of adult life. It was imperative in this study to take into account the great variability of backgrounds amongst the research participants.

In conversations with the participants I noted a universal and desperate need for them to tell their stories. It seemed, through telling their stories that

they were able to discover additional strengths of their personalities that they could utilize in their future endeavours. Through the interviews we seemed to be able to help each other as fellow travellers in life.

I was impressed by the participants' tenacity in seeking greater meaning in their lives. It would have been much easier for most of the participants to remain in their previous occupations until retirement and utilize leisure activities to fulfil their personal needs.

All of the participants, at least to some extent, wished to personally make a positive impact on society. Each was driven to fulfil his or her dream. They reinforced for me that my research was meaningful and needed to be done. Each was committed to personal excellence and lifelong learning. All were aware of personal strengths and sought to acquire training that would facilitate the utilization of these strengths.

Each participant took some risk in seeking a new career direction, whether sacrificing a more affluent lifestyle and outward career success and/or heading into unchartered vocational territory which they had never before explored. All overcame significant obstacles whether bureaucratic, psychological or physical.

From a personal viewpoint, I was able to learn a great deal about the theories of career planning and interpretive research. Through the interviews and analysis of the data,

I was able to sense more about my own strengths and weaknesses to formulate my own career plan. I was able to compare my own struggles to that of other adult students. I was able to grow intellectually and discovered for myself that the educational process was more important than the end result.

The importance of trusting one's intuition as a supplement to rational decision making seems critical to me when charting out a personal life course.

Through interviews with the study participants as well as other career changers, I am convinced that the root of occupational happiness lies in performing work that is consistent with personal values, interests and to a lesser extent skills -- to do what we were meant to do.

In conclusion, the study has confirmed for me many of the factors that I thought influenced adults in making career decisions. I learned a great deal about the research process and the difficulty in producing a document of acceptable quality. It certainly has assisted me in my anticipated future role as an outplacement consultant and life planning specialist. I look forward to meeting these difficult challenges.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based upon the research literature devoted to self concept and change, multiple careers and midlife career change, and higher education as it relates to career change, and in light of the analysis of the data gathered in this study, certain recommendations may be considered.

The following sections highlight some of the implications for practice and for future research in the above mentioned areas.

Practical Implications

This study has made a contribution to the understanding of career changing behaviour for mature students enroled in undergraduate studies at Canadian universities. Information learned from this study may smooth the transition from old to new career focus for some middle aged individuals who may choose to utilize university enrolment as a vehicle for change. It may also be of practical significance to career counsellors, and mature student advisors in public sector settings, in particular.

The results have provided insights into processes involved in multiple career change within a lifetime. The process does not seem as simple and straightforward as some of the literature on career planning would indicate.

Proper career decision making could involve rational decision making processes, serious personal reflection as well as intuition. More emphasis could be placed on personal analysis than expert opinion regarding personal career decisions.

Several prominent signals indicating career discontent have been noted. Important extrinsic and intrinsic factors have been identified which impact career decision making. Altruistic notions were prime motivators for change among the participants.

The struggles of the participants in career decision making were consistent with the theories regarding Adult Life Stages. The participants took significant risks whether financial, psychological or social in order to partake on a new career direction.

The study has demonstrated the close association between personal values and proper occupational choice. For the participants in the study, gender differences were not clearly demonstrated.

Implications for Research

While this study attempted to identify how a small group of mature undergraduate students made the decision to change career focus and utilize higher education to facilitate the change, it did not follow the students

throughout their academic years, to verify whether they followed up on their plans. A longitudinal study of this nature might be considered.

This study focused on a group of men and women who had varied academic backgrounds prior to participating in the study. Studying a group of men or women with similar academic or work experiences that are utilizing higher education to change careers may be of some merit.

In the study, only the mature undergraduate students were interviewed. Another study could ascertain the views of spouses as well as the students.

Concluding Statement

By examining career change through higher education, I found it possible to compare the mature undergraduates' perceptions to the existing literature regarding self concept and change, midlife and multiple career changes, and higher education's role in career change. My discussions with these mature learners shed light on the importance of rational decision making and intuition in bringing about personal career change. Most importantly, though, the study identified for me the sheer complexity of career change.

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APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE

CONSENT FORM

To Whom It May Concern:

I understand that the interview(s) which I will grant to Rob Hanson will be used as data for his Master's Thesis on Midlife Career Change.

I am aware that:

1. The interview(s) will be tape recorded.
2. Mr. Hanson may use direct quotations from the interview(s) at his discretion.
3. All identifying information will be disguised or withheld both in writing of the thesis and in discussion with Mr.Hanson's faculty advisors.
4. The tapes will be destroyed when the thesis is completed.
5. During the analysis stage of the study, Mr. Hanson may seek assistance in analysis and interpretation of the study.
6. I may withdraw from the study at any time.

signed:_____

date:_____

July 31, 1990

Dear

re your participation in the fall of 1988 in a study of mid-life career change.

Enclosed please find a copy of Chapter Three - Analysis for the above-noted document. You have been given the name of "Gail" to ensure your anonymity.

Kindly peruse the document to ensure that the reporting of your story was correct with your situation in the fall of 1988.

Should you have any comments or revisions that you would like to make to your story, please do not hesitate to contact me at (work) or (home).

Thank you again for your cooperation and participation in this study.

yours very truly,

Rob Hanson

August 16, 1989

Dear

re: your participation in thesis on mid-life career change

Enclosed please find a copy of your interview transcript regarding my thesis on mid-life career change. I apologize for the long delay in getting back to you.

As my thesis advisors begin the review of my work, they may raise some questions regarding my analysis of your responses. I may therefore be contacting you on the phone to seek some brief clarification.

Should you have any questions regarding my research, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Thank you again for your participation in my study.

yours very truly

Rob Hanson
phone: (work);

APPENDIX B

PROBLEM STATEMENT, INTERVIEW PLAN

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

(Given to volunteer participants)

The purpose of the study is to seek tentative answers to the following question:

What concerns, issues and processes are involved in the decision of middle-aged individuals to abandon a previous career and enrol as mature, undergraduate students at a large Canadian university?

Several specific questions that guide the development of the thesis are as follows:

1. DECISION TO CHANGE CAREERS:

1.1 What intrinsic and extrinsic factors are involved in the decision to leave the previous career?

1.2 What are the feelings associated with the abandonment of the previous career?

1.3 How have colleagues, advisors, and significant others assisted in the decision to abandon the previous career?

2. DECISION TO ENROL IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

2.1 What factors are involved in the decision to enrol in the particular program chosen at the university?

2.2 What barriers and problems are associated with enrolment at the university?

2.3 What are the feelings regarding the choice to learn in a large university setting?

2.4 How has formal education been viewed as a vehicle for career change?

2.5 How have colleagues, advisors and significant others assisted in the decision to enrol at the university?

3. DECISION TO ASSUME A NEW CAREER DIRECTION

3.1 What factors are involved in the choice of a new employment focus? What relative consideration is given to prepare for a job in demand versus a job utilizing specific aptitudes and interests?

3.2 What are the employment goals in five years? ten years?

3.3 What are the views regarding the employment future? Is another career expected before retirement?

3.4 What are the benefits that are derived from employment?

INTERVIEW PLAN

(sample questions)

- What internal and external factors were involved in the decision to leave the previous career?
- Describe any feelings associated with the abandonment of the previous career.
- How have colleagues, advisors, and significant others assisted in the decision to abandon the previous career?
- What factors were involved in the decision to enrol in the particular program chosen at the university?
- What barriers and problems were associated with enrolment at the university?
- What are the feelings regarding the choice to learn in a large university setting?
- How is formal education viewed as a vehicle for career change?
- How have colleagues, advisors and significant others assisted in the decision to enrol at this particular university?
- What factors were involved in the choice of a new employment focus? What relative consideration was given to prepare for a job in demand vs. a job utilizing specific aptitudes and interests?
- What are your employment goals in five years, ten years?
- What are the views regarding the employment future? Is another career expected before retirement?

- What are the major reasons that you work?

Gail - sample of interview

WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME ABOUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND WORK HISTORY TO DATE

I went to the U of A and got a B.A. with one year break in the middle of it.....I think I graduated in the spring of '72. My first job after getting a B.A. was janitor for the U of A because I didn't type.....couldn't find anything else

DID YOU JUST HAVE A GENERAL B.A.?

English and Anthropology.....and from that point, I pestered the university until they gave me a job in the library.....I worked there for about a year,.....first as a clerk....with a boring job.....and I very quickly got a job as an information clerk.....with Humanities and Social Sciences..unfortunately, after a year, I thought that I could do better elsewhere....which was a mistake I think.....so I then became an accountant for .....(employer) was just starting up.....I got the job through manpower....and I worked there for about two or three years....in a job that involved purely clerical work.....no chance of getting into television which of course I liked the idea of doing.... and when I realized it was a dead end job,and that I was going to be working a lot of overtime.....without much pay.....I tried getting a job in the government, thinking that I could get a job counselling or doing something interesting intellectual and

all that.....and I applied for a number of jobs without success because I still didn't type very well.....I finally got a job as a pay and benefits clerk.....in I think .....it was the spring of '75.....one of the reasons how I got that job ...was that my high school english teacher's sister was one of the people giving the competition.....and I stayed at that job until '78.....at which point I left Edmonton to escape from a rather abusive boyfriend,, moved to Toronto.....searched for work for approximately 2 months.....finally someone told me that they would not hire anybody from Alberta....because there were lots of jobs in Alberta

WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP, WHAT DID YOU SEE YOURSELF AS WORKING AT EVENTUALLY,.....WHAT WERE YOUR DREAMS WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG?

I didn't have a clear career goal.....I had been assured by my parents that once I got to university, I would start enjoying school and the world would open up....I would know what I wanted to do and the world would be wonderful....and I had to get into university or I would end up scrubbing floors.....which was why being a janitor was such a satisfying job (laugh)

BUT YOU WERE AN EDUCATED JANITOR....

yes.

SO THE REASON THAT YOU LEFT YOUR PREVIOUS CAREERS, ONCE AGAIN WERE PRIMARILY BECAUSE YOU WANTED SOMETHING MORE IN

LIFE? AM I PARAPHRASING YOU CORRECTLY?

I had wanted something that involved using words rather than numbers...and I've always been interested in counselling....people related things.....originally I had planned being a teacher.....but after a year of education, ...I felt that I would know nothing.....being a teacher going straight from high school to university and back to school....so I went into arts....and it was a desire to be independent.....that made me stop instead of getting an after degree in education.....and then after I had abandoned my family,....there was no going back.....I toyed with the idea of being a librarian.....and abandoned that after several years,.....I thought about being a lawyer.....wrote the LSAT exam.....and I would have to get.....to improve my grades.....fortunately I was called into jury duty....and that persuaded me that I didn't want to be a lawyer..(laughter).....it was very interesting but it gave me enough of an insight into the whole process to make me sure that I didn't want to do that.....in aptitude tests, they always said,.....religious leader, psychologist, teacher and if I had more math and science,...credit,.....I would have been tempted to go back and get a psychologist's degree.....but it takes too much time and money.....

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT HOW YOUR LIFE HAS UNFOLDED TO DATE?

.....Well.....to a great extent....its just sort of expediency.....I've left being a pay and benefits clerk several times because it's a very frustrating, high pressure, low rewarding job....both monetary and other wise....and I've gone back to it because I needed money....for security.....certainly once I realized I was going to be a single parent, ...i....it seemed the best job I could get....because I knew I could make....more than $20,000 a year ...barely....and I'd have my 15 days annual vacation leave...and 5 days. ....child related leave.....what more could you want?

SO STICK IT OUT FOR THE OTHER 350 DAYS.....

yeah

SO WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS NOW THAT YOU'VE ABANDONED THAT.....AND COME BACK AND EMBARK ON A NEW CAREER....

Well I have mixed feelings,.....for one thing I'm quite concerned that I will be able to get a job when I am finished....and I'm ignoring that....and it's a bit of a shock to see how young the other students are.....and I'm feeling quite worried about my own language skills .....having been number crunching and speaking jargon for the last... more than 15 years....uh.....however.... ....now that I've sat in on a few classes....and realized that I've been reading about things that can help a little bit with my classes.....I'm feeling more excited than scared.....mostly I'm feeling quite intimidated and

threatened and overwhelmed by the....amount of..paper—I have to process....in the next 10 weeks.....

OK HAVE MENTORS, ADVISORS, FRIENDS, OR FAMILY.....HAVE THEY HAD ANY EFFECT ON CHANGING CAREERS.....HAVE THEY PLAYED ANY ROLE IN YOUR CAREER TO DATE?

.....To a certain extent.....I have a friend who does employment research for unemployment insurance.....and she's convinced that this is a very foolish move.....that people should not be going into education at this time.....they should be going into.....some other field.....a lot of people have given me very negative feedback.....on the situation...just having to deal with junior high students.....or high school students ...they're an unpleasant group of people to work with.....but on the other hand....my hobby for more than the past 10 years has been TAI CHI.....and I know that I enjoy teaching.....and I enjoy sort of communicating ideas and concepts to children .....so I feel that it may be a good step

HAVE YOU TAUGHT TAI CHI?

Yes, I've taught a couple of hours a week for several years.

ARE YOU FAIRLY ADVANCED IN THE HIERARCHY OF TAI CHI?

Not really, it's not very hierarchical. And also I haven't practised as much as most people with my length of experience. Parenthood takes a lot of time.Somehow my own

private life seems to get lost in the wayside.

OK, YOU DECIDED TO ENROL AT THE UNIVERSITY HERE. PERHAPS ELABORATE A BIT ON WHY YOU DECIDED TO ENROL AT THIS PARTICULAR UNIVERSITY AND WHY YOU CHOSE TO ENROL IN THE ELEMENTARY ROUTE

Secondary it's called.

AND WHY YOU DECIDED TO TAKE WHAT COURSES....

HOW DID YOU ARRIVE AT THOSE KINDS OF DECISIONS.....

I was living in Toronto until the middle of December....I came to Edmonton, primarily, because after 10 years in Toronto, I'd been having increasing bronchial problems.....A year ago, it turned into asthma....and my allergist is convinced that a cleaner environment should help alleviate some of that....

DO YOU THINK THAT STRESS IS RELATED AT ALL TO THAT?

Stress is a part of it.....But it's not all of it....because my asthma attacks are related directly to exposure to paint, plaster dust,.....specific things.....at first,....it was just in the workplace because I was in a closed air building....but I've had other attacks since the first one...just because now if I'm allowed paint.....I get sick fast

VITA

NAME: Robert William Hanson

PLACE OF BIRTH: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1950

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:

Masters of Adult and Higher Education (candidate)
University of Alberta

Graduate Diploma in Adult Education 1985
University of Alberta

Bachelor of Commerce 1973
University of Alberta

Bachelor of Science 1971
University of Alberta

Life Management Skills Leadership 1988
Grant MacEwan Community College

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Personnel Consultant 1988-
Staff Development Consultant
Management Trainer
Alberta Health

Contract Instructor 1989-
Alberta Career Dev't & Employment

Academic Upgrading Instructor 1986-88
Lakeland College

Trainer, Management Consultant 1983-
Self Employed

Office Manager/Accountant 1977-83
Boundary Equipment Ltd.
Summit Engineering Sales Ltd.
Kennametal Ltd.
Alberta Association of Registered Nursing Assistants

Administration Officer/Credit Officer 1973-76
Toronto Dominion Bank